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CHALLENGE



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February 19, 2003

Volume 38 #03

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U.S. Imperialists' Plan: ENDLESS WARS TO MURDER MILLIONS

Columbia Shuttle: A Military Operation

The coming U.S.-led invasion of Iraq isn't just about oil. It's mainly about U.S. rulers using oil to defend their world dominance against all competitors. Oil threats and oil bribes based on a presumed U.S. victory in Iraq now play a key role in its grand strategy, preventing the rise of a rival superpower. But these schemes may prove fatally arrogant. U.S. rulers must first build support for the war, win it, and then face the outrage that will follow the slaughter.

Washington fears the emergence, over time, of an alliance between Russia and Western Europe that would surpass the U.S. economically and could catch up militarily. The French and Russian contracts with Saddam Hussein to develop Iraq's vast oil fields would help them challenge U.S. supremacy. So U.S. rulers are warning Moscow and Paris to change sides now or face an Iraqi oil shut-off. "Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Russia and France 'must be ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in any US-led military intervention' if they want a share of Iraqi oil." (*Oil and Gas International*, 1/27).

France's President Chirac appeared to give in to the U.S. by readying an aircraft carrier and 15,000 French troops for the U.S.-led assault. "Then [Ger-

man Chancellor] Schröder made...Chirac an offer he could not refuse: to permanently assert French-German dominance over the 23 other nations of Continental Europe." (*New York Times*, 1/24) Germany and France moved to change the rotating presidency of the European Council from one which now gives smaller nations influence to a system with a long-term French or German president. Double-crossing the U.S., Chirac paid Schröder back by promising a French UN Security Council veto on U.S. action in Iraq.

Russia's oil bosses seem divided on whether to stick with Hussein or take the U.S. bribe. Iraq recently terminated the huge West Qurna oil production contract with Russia's Lukoil because of "Lukoil's behind-the-scenes attempts to get assurances that it would keep its contract after any regime change in Iraq." (*Energy Intelligence Group*,—EIG—1/21) Such assurances could have come only from the White House. But other Russian oil firms are bucking the U.S. "Proving it still held Moscow near and dear to its heart, however, Baghdad last week offered Russia a clutch of other oil deals." (EIG) This split helps account for

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By now it's quite clear that the space shuttles are flying coffins, buried by capitalist budget cuts and maximum profits. Six scientists were dismissed from the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel in March 2001 after repeatedly complaining about deficiencies in the operation of the shuttle program. Just a few months ago, the White House brushed off the accusations by Don Nelson, a retired mission planner and NASA supervisor. Nelson warned Bush last August that the astronauts faced imminent danger, citing many problems in the shuttles — hydrogen leaks, dented fuel lines, wiring and computer failures.

John Marburger, Bush's chief science adviser, discussed Nelson's letter with NASA officials and then "answered" Nelson by praising NASA's safety record, concluding that there was no reason to stop the shuttle flights.

Why weren't the shuttles grounded when it was clear they're old and unsafe? Firstly, war contractors like Boeing and Lockheed reap huge profits from the space program. The United Space Alliance, a joint venture of these two companies, is extremely profitable since they get fees to manage the construction of space craft and also get paid to subcontract it — double dipping — both to themselves and to 20 other firms. The crisis of over-

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Kennedy Liberals Want UN Stamp on Iraq War

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Putin's waffling on Iraq.

It's hardly a coincidence that France and Russia, the objects of U.S. oil-deal enticements and extortions, have veto power in the UN Security Council. To help ensure long-term U.S. domination of the Middle East, liberal U.S. rulers seek the UN's stamp of approval for the coming war. Complaining that Bush's efforts at the UN were haphazard, the liberal *New York Times* (2/2) demanded, "Before moving toward invasion, the United States needs to win the widest possible Security Council backing." No doubt Colin Powell must promise France and Russia bigger cuts of post-war Iraqi oil.

The U.S. is likewise brandishing the oil weapon to compel temporary support from China, which also has a permanent seat on the Security Council. "Baghdad's unilateral termination of Lukoil's contract for the West Qurna field in December left China National Petroleum Corp [CNPC] as the only oil company with a firm production-sharing contract

in Iraq. [CNPC and other] Chinese companies are supposed to invest \$1.3 billion." (EIG, 1/16) U.S. guarantees greased the transactions. "These companies wouldn't be signing deals if they thought they would become worthless after a regime change." (EIG).

These deals serve the long-range strategy of U.S. rulers beyond aiding an attack on Iraq. China's burgeoning economy is demanding increasing quantities of Persian Gulf oil. The U.S. wants Chinese oil firms operating in the Mideast to be junior partners dependent on Exxon Mobil and Chevron Texaco. "The Asian companies could seek to bring in oil majors as partners in a post-Saddam Iraq in order to reduce their risk and alleviate their financial burden." (EIG) But China's bosses have other ideas. They are building a "blue-water" navy that could someday challenge the U.S. fleet for mastery of the oil routes.

Kennedy/NY Times Liberals Want War — With UN Support

It takes time to make these deals. Liberals, like Sen-

ator Kennedy who calls for a delay in the fighting until "convincing evidence" against Hussein is furnished, are merely buying time to iron out the post-war oil arrangements. "The international clamor of demands to give UN weapons inspectors more time may eventually prove to be just another bout of horse trading." (*International Oil Daily*, 1/28) Kennedy & Co., in fact, want to hit Iraq with as large and as deadly a coalition as possible. This is the stand taken by all the leading Democratic Party presidential candidates and the leadership of the anti-war movement.

To secure Iraqi oil and their top-dog status, U.S. rulers plan to kill hundreds of thousands of workers and children. We can't stop them from starting this bloodbath. But war lays bare the murderous essence of the profit system and opens the door to communist organizing. We can and must build the Progressive Labor Party in this new period. ☸

Anti-War Means Fighting Capitalism

(The following is taken from a PLP leaflet distributed at the Jan. 11 Los Angeles and Jan. 18 San Francisco anti-war protest.)

The imminent war with Iraq forces growing numbers of workers, youth and others involved in mass protests to ask a basic question:

Will the anti-war movement once again just deal with symptoms and leave a war's root economic causes unopposed, or will it take on the actual causes of war itself — the profit system?

Despite a propaganda onslaught about weapons of mass destruction and counter-claims about election-year gimmickry and maintaining domestic oil supplies, this is an imperialist war. Only 14% of oil consumed in the U.S. comes from the Persian Gulf. U.S. capitalists are fighting for control over ALL the Persian Gulf oil, which goes mainly to their capitalist rivals. These petroleum reserves are vital to the profits of the giant U.S. oil companies, like ExxonMobil, as well as to U.S. strategic control of the Middle East. They use war to maintain their bottom line and in their drive for world domination.

- If the anti-war movement only opposes another U.S. attack on Iraq — while ignoring the war's

causes in the capitalist profit system — it sets the stage for a long cycle of oil wars and short-lived, pacifist, nowhere anti-war movements.

- If the anti-war movement makes common cause with those who only object to unilateral war, not to the shedding of workers' blood for oil profits, the anti-war movement can become a pro-war movement

If the anti-war movement only targets the Bush administration's war preparations and absolves the Democrats, despite the latter's fully-documented support of long-term military build-up and involvement in the Middle East, it allies itself with the U.S. government in future wars for profit and domination.

overnight.

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- If the anti-war movement fawns

over liberal politicians and ignores soldiers and workers — and their amazing record of stopping the U.S. war machine in Vietnam — it will produce more wars and reactive, superficial anti-war movements.

- If the anti-war movement downplays the combined fascist impacts of cutbacks, layoffs and Homeland Security on activists, immigrants, minorities and workers, it will ignore the main forces who are hurt by war and who can actually bring down the profit system. The anti-war movement will be vulnerable to racist divisions, fear, political repression and jail.

Only a communist-led international movement can address the war's root causes in capitalism, imperialism and racism. We cannot afford to side with "lesser-evils"; treat the war as an isolated event; cave into anti-communism; or ignore the power of soldiers, workers and others to bring the war machine to its knees. In the long run, we need to take power through revolution to get rid of capitalism and its wars, building a true communist system where production will meet the needs of the working class, not the warmongers' profits. ☸

A Military Operation

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production has led to less investment in commercial planes and more on satellite production.

Secondly, the space program is also important for U.S. imperialist military plans to control the world. Ninety percent of Columbia's experiments were military in nature, as were the last 50 shuttle flights. That's why most of the astronauts are military personnel. The Israeli astronaut killed on the Columbia not only participated in the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in the 1980s but also led the air attacks that killed thousands of civilians in Southern Lebanon during the Israeli occupation.

That's the nature of capitalism in this day and age: everything is militarized for the endless wars the U.S. imperialists are planning in order to rule the world. The lives of millions — including the astronauts — mean nothing when it comes to protecting this obsolete, rotten system. ☸



WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

☸PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

☸Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

☸Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money

and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

☸Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

☸Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

☸Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☸Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!



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CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$5.00. Subscription: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. February 19, 2003 Volume 38, No.03

A War Budget Leaves Every Child Behind

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 3 — Teachers are organizing a campaign within the union here to strike against a war budget, demanding a moratorium on debt payments to banker-bond holders, and that money now financing war and “homeland security” be spent on schools, colleges, Medi-Cal and hospitals. A union committee sponsored a bus to the recent San Francisco anti-war march with an official banner declaring, “A war budget leaves every child behind.”

The bosses’ war drive attacks workers in Iraq and worldwide but it also must attack the working class here, using our taxes for war instead of using them to bail out county and state budgets in crisis. In California, this crisis means huge Medi-Cal cuts, college tuition hikes, a freeze on school expenditures, class-size increases and teacher layoffs. Meanwhile the bankers take their cut off the top — the interest payments on debt is mandated untouchable under the bosses’ laws.

Still, there’s a surprising amount of resistance to a strike from union activists who seem to have more confidence in passing resolutions and working for “lesser-evil” Democrats than in the power of the working class — teachers and students — to shut it down. Nevertheless, some teachers are determined to circulate petitions for action against the cuts, to organize a fight in the union’s representative bodies.

The anti-war movement offers opportunities to win people to understanding that capitalism requires war, and that ending imperialist wars means ending the profit system. High school and college students attacked by these cuts helped the PLP contingent distribute literature blaming the war and the cuts on capitalism. While much PLP literature was enthusiastically distributed in the huge January marches, and should continue to reach the many honest people who participate, agitation alone won’t build a movement that can challenge the rul-

ing class and lead to a fight for power.

Many unions have recently passed resolutions “opposing the Bush administration’s war on Iraq.” Some have also blamed Bush for the budget cuts. Such resolutions can strengthen ties with forces opposing imperialist war. Fighting for them can lead to political struggle for an understanding that the problem is not just Bush — to be replaced by a Democrat — but is capitalist rivalry over control of maximum profits.

Yet such resolutions can also breed passivity, or worse. It can divert workers away from class struggle against the system. Blaming the whole crisis on Bush without any plan of action leads to reliance on the Democrats, the bosses’ other party of war and fascism.

A mass fight could lead to some-



thing the bosses’ media can’t turn on and off like a faucet. It’s part of creating a force among teachers, students and parents against the racist cuts and imperialist war. PLP’s influence can help build a movement that can organize a working-class fight, with communist leadership, against the whole system. Eventually it can destroy capitalism and wars for profit once and for all. ☸

AFL-CIO Resolutions No Substitute For Class Struggle

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 4 — The AFL-CIO here seems in a dither now that the bosses’ war train is leaving the station. The web sites of the different Democratic Party and liberal anti-war groups were buzzing about the “anti-war, anti-Patriot Act resolution [passed] unanimously at a very well-attended delegate’s meeting.”

Predictably, the LA Federation of Labor attacks the Bush administration’s war drive as a “Wag the Dog” distraction from the sinking economy, corporate corruption, and layoffs. But they don’t mention the imperialists’ desperate need to grab cheap Mid-East oil ahead of their rivals. The Federation forgets that “Wag the Dog” was a movie made during Clinton’s eight-year bombing of Iraq’s “no-fly” zones. Rather than a distraction from the sinking economy, this war is the bosses’ solution to the current crisis of overproduction (Republicans and Democrats alike).

But the AFL-CIO leadership’s most glaring shortcoming is its forsaking class struggle and workers’ solidarity. In 2001 there were one million layoffs in the US; in 2002 Boeing laid off 35,000, the Telecom industries eliminated double that number — all this with no fight or calls for unity with workers worldwide facing similar layoffs. But there was plenty of patriotism and support for the “war on terrorism.” By year’s end, United Airlines mechanics and the West Coast dockworkers were both left to dangle in the wind. New York City transit workers, watching their union President hugging the top transit boss on TV, only voted in a sellout contract by a 60-40 margin.

Workers waiting for the real fighting labor movement should not be fooled that another resolution, even one against the war and Homeland Security, means the AFL-CIO is coming out swinging.

It’s one thing to “Resolve that the LA Federation...join other[s]...to actively promote and participate in activities opposing the Bush administration’s drive to war.”

But meanwhile they stand by passively while LA Transit stiffes the mechanics with a one-year, 1% wage-increase “offer.” Since when did 1% a year become a “union contract”?

The company blames the state budget crisis and an economy flirting with recession. But these are the same things the LA Fed blames on the Bush war-drive and says it’s “resolved” to stand up against them. But there’s no united labor support for the transit workers, schoolteachers, county hospital workers and unorganized immigrant workers who have no health insurance.

The rank and file is prolonging its frustration and suffering by not organizing to take power into our own hands. A number of workers have heard the bell and said its time to come out of our defensive crouch. At the LA transit strike-vote meeting there were loud calls for a new union president and jeers against a short-term contract. There was a demand for a seriously prepared strike, instead of just a strike vote, to threaten the company and oppose the war budget.

One worker, commenting on the Columbia’s disintegration, said, “In LA the tiles are falling off the walls of the public school bathrooms because they don’t hire janitors and maintenance workers. Why should we be shocked if the thermal tiles fall off the Space Shuttle?”

U.S. tanks and armor are rolling up to Iraq’s border daily. In a figurative sense they’re also rolling up to the schools, hospital clinics and transit divisions throughout the U.S. But the “collateral damage” and death to the working people in Iraq and here will be all too real.

Workers are skeptical. But disbelief and thinking that George Bush and Colin Powell are liars and thieves isn’t enough. Rather than empty words of resolution without action, workers should organize against these attacks by all the bosses and for the long struggle of taking power into the hands of our class. ☸

Campus Marchers Link ROTC to Oil War

Five hundred students, professors and community residents marched against the creation of a new ROTC on a California State University campus, chanting “1, 2, 3, 4, we don’t want your oil war, 5, 6, 7, 8, don’t recruit us for your hate.”

An anti-war coalition planned every aspect of the march, building closer friendships through the strength of multi-racial unity. Several guerilla theater skits drew students’ attention to the struggle. PLP members helped build it, especially linking the upcoming imperialist war, the ROTC, the budget cuts and the capitalist system.

The march was positive but we must build solidarity between students and rank-and-file soldiers. Their class interests are the opposite of the ROTC officers who order them to risk their lives and kill other workers for the bosses’ oil profits and their racist system. We must also build solidarity between students and campus workers. Custodians are ordered to tear down all our flyers and not to speak to coalition members.

Despite anti-ROTC votes of both the Faculty Senate and the Associated Students years ago as well as a large anti-war coalition currently opposing it, the ROTC wants to recruit on campus, teach pro-imperialist lies as history courses, and conduct “adventure training.” If refused access, they threatened using the 1996 Solomon Amendment to deny several million dollars in federal grants to the school. After hiding these facts and then orchestrating a deceptive campaign to build support for the ROTC, the university president signed an indefinite “partnership” with it, providing campus classrooms and office space. They will focus on recruiting Hispanic students (the Hispanic Access Initiative) with special access to their student records. Evidently, the Universities can’t recruit black and Latino students (Affirmative Action) but the Army certainly can.

The ROTC, forcing itself onto campus with Administration help, is another example of the dictatorship of the capitalist class. No matter what workers, students or teachers vote for, the bosses — to guarantee their class rule — mobilize the entire capitalist state, pass fascist laws and slash billions from health care, education and welfare in order to finance their imperialist wars. Meanwhile, their universities spread pro-capitalist, anti-worker ideas among the students and recruit working-class students to defend the bosses’ profits.

PLP members must build study groups that stress the similar class interests of workers, soldiers and students and the need to unite to destroy the capitalist system. Those who must sell their labor power to survive are members of the working class. PLP aims to sharpen the class struggle and organize all workers to fight for a communist world based on meeting the needs of the international working class. Join us!

DuBois Praised Stalin the Revolutionary

The great William E. B. DuBois was one of the leading fighters against racism in the 20th century. He founded the NAACP a century ago. After 50 years of anti-racist struggle, he joined the Communist Party in 1945, declaring that becoming a communist was "the logic of my life." That fact will be well-hidden by the hypocritical U.S. rulers as they "celebrate" Black History Month while preparing another racist war for oil in the Middle East. Even more hidden will be the homage DuBois — a true hero, beloved by the working class, black and white — paid to the communist world leader, Joseph Stalin, on the occasion of Stalin's death in March, 1953, 50 years ago next month.

(From the National Guardian, March 16, 1953)

Josef Stalin was a great man; few other men of the twentieth century approach his stature. He was simple, calm and courageous. He seldom lost his poise; pondered his problems slowly, made his decisions clearly and firmly; never yielded to ostentation nor coyly refrained from holding his rightful place with dignity. He was the son of a serf, but stood calmly before the great without hesitation or nerves. But also — and this was the highest proof of his greatness — he knew the common man, felt his problems, followed his fate.

Stalin was not a man of conventional learning; he was much more than that; he was a man who thought deeply, read understandingly and listened to wisdom, no matter whence it came. He was attacked and slandered as few men of power have been; yet he seldom lost his courtesy and balance; nor did he let attack drive him from his con-



victions or induce him to surrender positions which he knew were correct. As one of the despised minorities of man, he first set Russia on the road to conquer race prejudice and make one nation out of its 140 groups without destroying their individuality.

His judgment of men was profound. He early saw through the flamboyance and exhibitionism of Trotsky, who fooled the world, and especially America. The whole ill-bread and insulting attitude of liberals in the U.S. today began with our naive acceptance of Trotsky's magnificent lying propaganda, which he carried around the world. Against it, Stalin stood like a rock and moved neither right nor left, as he continued to advance toward a real socialism instead of the sham Trotsky offered.

Three great decisions faced Stalin in power and he met them magnificently; first, the problem of the peasants, then the West European attack, and last the Second World War. The poor Russian peasant was the lowest victim of tsarism, capitalism and the Orthodox Church. He surrendered the Little White Father [the Tsar] easily; he turned less readily but perceptibly

from his icons; but his kulaks [rich peasants] clung tenaciously to capitalism and were near wrecking the revolution when Stalin risked a second revolution and drove out the rural bloodsuckers.

Then came intervention, the continuing threat of attack by all nations, halted by the Depression, only to be reopened by Hitlerism. It was Stalin who steered the Soviet Union between Scylla and Charybdis;* Western Europe and the U.S. were willing to betray her to fascism, and then had to beg her aid in the Second World War. A lesser man than Stalin would have demanded vengeance for Munich, but he had the wisdom to ask only justice for his fatherland....The British Empire proposed first to save itself in Africa and southern Europe, while Hitler smashed the Soviets.

The Second Front dawdled, but Stalin pressed unflinchingly ahead. He risked the utter ruin of socialism in order to smash the dictatorship of Hitler and Mussolini. After Stalingrad the Western World did not know whether to weep or applaud. The cost of victory to the Soviet Union was frightful. To this day the outside world has no dream of the hurt, the loss and the sacrifices. For his calm, stern leadership here, if nowhere else, arises the deep worship of Stalin by the people of all the Russias.

Then came the problem of Peace. Hard as this was to Europe and America, it was far harder to Stalin and the Soviets. The conventional rulers of the world hated and feared them and would have been only too willing to see the utter failure of this attempt at socialism. At the same time the fear of Japan and Asia was also real. Diplomacy therefore took hold and Stalin was picked as the victim. He was called

in conference with British Imperialism represented by its trained and well-fed aristocracy; and with the vast wealth and potential power of America represented by its most liberal leader in half a century.

Here Stalin showed his real greatness. He neither cringed nor strutted. He never presumed, he never surrendered....He asked neither adulation nor vengeance. He was reasonable and conciliatory. But on what he deemed essential, he was inflexible. He was willing to resurrect the League of Nations, which had insulted the Soviets. He was willing to fight Japan, even though Japan was then no menace to the Soviet Union, and might be death to the British Empire and to American trade. But on two points Stalin was adamant: Clemenceau's "Cordon Sanitaire"*** must be returned to the Soviets, whence it had been stolen as a threat. The Balkans were not to be left helpless before Western exploitation for the benefit of land monopoly....

Such was the man who lies dead, still the butt of noisy jackals and the ill-bred men of some parts of the dis-tempered West. In life he suffered under continuous and studied insult; he was forced to make bitter decisions on his own lone responsibility. His reward comes as the common man stands in solemn acclaim.

W.E.B. DuBois, March 16, 1953

***From Greek mythology, caught between two monsters."**

****Stalin insisted that the Balkans and Eastern Europe not be an imperialist launching pad for the West to invade the Soviet Union once again.**

NY TIMES: All Workers Are 'Fit' To Be Laid Off

The hypocrisy of the *New York Times*' "concern" for the unemployed that is sometimes expressed on its editorial page is completely exposed by its current drive to eliminate a "no layoff" clause in its coming contract with the Newspaper Guild. The Guild said Times' bosses "made clear in its first bargaining session with the union that 'no layoffs' language must be eliminated." (*N. Y. Daily News*, 1/31)

The union has 1,500 members at the Times and the job security clause covers all workers on the payroll in 1997. This mouthpiece for the Eastern Establishment section of the ruling class characterized the "no layoff" clause as an "extreme provision."

While this billion-dollar media conglomerate often "criticizes" the Bush administration for being "heartless" towards the unemployed, when its own profits are concerned it acts like any boss under capitalism and has no qualms whatsoever about adding to the jobless rolls.☹

Stalingrad: The Real 'Mother of All Battles'

February 2 marked the 60th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Battle of Stalingrad, the real "Mother of All Battles." It was the turning point of World War II, the beginning of the end of the Nazi regime.

On August 23, 1942, Luftwaffe planes, commanded by Baron Wolfram von Richtofen (who led the fascist onslaught on Guernica during the Spanish Civil War) launched the mass bombing that eventually destroyed Stalingrad. In the first week, 40,000 of the 600,000 inhabitants were killed. The "devastating attack moved Stalin to declare 'Ni shag nasad' (not one step backwards)." (*El Mundo*, Spain, 2/2/03).

In September, Field Marshall Paulus' VI Wehrmacht army launched a series of successful attacks against the industrial center. But the Soviet 62nd Army, commanded by V. Chuikov, resisted. It was the beginning of what the Nazis called ratenkrieg (war of rats), or house-to-house combat. This prolonged the fighting until winter arrived. The commitment and courage of the Red Army and Stalingrad's working class held off the Nazi

juggernaut. Right in the middle of the fighting, the workers built tanks and other weapons for battles outside their plants.

After 170 days, the remaining 91,000 Nazi troops and 24 generals surrendered. Hundreds of thousands of Nazis died, along with over one million Soviet soldiers and civilians.

"Our Red Army was so powerful that...we would have not only reached Berlin but the Gulf of Vizcaya (Spain)," one veteran told *El Mundo*.

By mid-1944, Soviet tanks and infantry were rolling westward at 40 miles a day. Only when the U.S. and Britain realized the Red Army would defeat the bulk of the Nazi army by itself did they open the second front in France. Over 70% of the active Nazi war machine in Europe was tied up fighting the Soviets.

The capitalist implosion of the former Soviet Union achieved what the Nazis couldn't. This was caused by the opportunism of the Soviet rulers and the weaknesses of socialism, retaining many capitalist practices like the



wage system.

There are only 50,000 Red Army Stalingrad veterans still alive. They can hardly survive on a miserable pension of 3,000 rubles (\$85). Even the name of their beloved city has been changed, to Volgograd. Putin has blocked a movement to change it back to Stalingrad.

Still, the lessons of the heroic Soviet workers and soldiers live on. As the world's imperialists prepare for endless wars, the international working class will continue what the Red Army and Soviet workers achieved in Stalingrad. That's the goal of the communist PLP.☹

WORKERS OF THE WORLD WRITE!

DESAFIO: 'our best political tool . . .'

I've been a PLP member for about a year and live in one of the many poor neighborhoods abandoned and depressed by the Colombian government. We see representatives of the bosses' state on two occasions: when politicians come to ask for our votes and make promises they never carry out; the other when the cops conduct their almost daily raids "searching for "guerrillas or their collaborators." These same cops do nothing to stop the right-wing death squads which nightly terrorize workers and youth, charging us their own taxes and killing whoever they dislike.

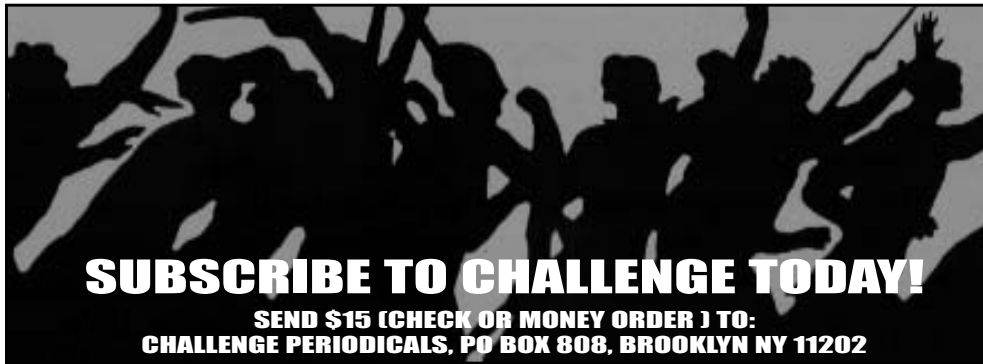
With the help of *DESAFIO-CHALLENGE*, our best political tool, I'm organizing a PLP group with some friends and relatives. We study the Party literature and debate the real causes of our problems as workers. I also bring our communist politics to several neighborhood social groups.

Workers and youth must understand history and dialectics, to learn that the only way out of this capitalist hell is to fight for a society without bosses and their death squads: communism.

Red Comrade

Retirees Organize Labor Solidarity

I recently retired from my job. As a communist, I'd been an active shop



steward for many years. After a recent retiree meeting which discussed the impact of contract negotiations of a major union, I suggested that our 25,000-member retiree association form a solidarity committee to organize support for struggles of other unions and community groups. I'm now co-chair of that committee.

The very next day we were called to a union hall to help in strike preparations. I'm meeting workers who've been activists in many union locals. In less than two months, over 40 retirees have signed up for this committee. One member expanded our notion of solidarity by suggesting we also focus on the needs of homebound retirees.

It's heartening to see the idea of class solidarity so eagerly adopted by retired workers. I'm sure this committee will bump into plenty of pro-boss "united-we-stand" ideas but it will also lead me into many exciting opportunities to serve the working class and build our communist movement.

Keeping Young

Transit Rank & File Challenges Sellout

On Jan. 9, the Transport Workers (TWU) held a rally at Hunter College in a huge hall but only 60 people attended. Half were TWU staff. Union president Roger Toussaint tried to get workers' approval of the contract his leadership had just negotiated with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA).

The few rank-and-file workers present were mostly concerned about the new layoff clause. Toussaint's spokesman rationalized that the old layoff clause didn't protect jobs either, to which a worker replied, "Then why change it?"

Toussaint said we needn't worry because the layoff clause was rarely used only when the City was in deep financial trouble. Another worker disputed that idea, saying that while Verizon reported recent profits in the billions they were laying off thousands. He said layoffs, speed-up and

benefit cuts are the usual ways businesses exploit workers for more profit.

Since that rally, frustrated workers voted for the contract; 40 health workers servicing TWU members have been laid off; and hundreds more are facing layoffs as the MTA is closing 177 token booths and announcing cuts in bus service. More layoffs and threats are in the cards as the MTA seeks more concessions.

Toussaint and his staff tries to pass off the phony idea that his "leadership" is following in the footsteps of former TWU president "Red" Mike Quill. Although Quill was not a communist, he used them to help organize the union and learned enough from them to know that the only thing the bosses respect is workers' power. He used this to win decent conditions and to smash the anti-strike law.

Quill was called "Red Mike" by the bosses' media because he used communist ideas to inspire not only transit workers but many city and national unions with the idea that they could fight back and win against the bosses' power. If transit workers don't want to return to the sweatshop/company union days, they need to relearn communist ideas and organize their own leadership from the ranks.

Retired Transit Worker

Capitalist Crisis and Nuclear Doctrine

(The following is excerpted from an article by Heinz Dieterich Steffan, an analyst on Latin American affairs, published in Rebellion.org. Translation by the CHALLENGE staff.)

Capitalism, incapable of solving the big problems facing humanity in a constructive way — through productive forces — has decided to do it through nuclear force, the most destructive possible path. Nuclear weapons have been adapted for use as conventional ones [depleted uranium bombs]. Similarly, the old nuclear doctrine has been adapted to the current situation. All this has been justified by Washington's hypocrisy about international terrorism.

The U.S. is the only country to use nuclear weapons, against the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945.

The U.S. is the only country to use nuclear weapons, against the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945. There was no military reason for these attacks. The Air Force generals had told President Harry Truman that conventional bombing would force Japan to surrender in a few weeks. But there

was a strong political motive for this war crime — to warn Soviet leader Joseph Stalin that in the new post-World War II New World Order, the U.S. had overwhelming military superiority; therefore, the Soviet Union better not dare challenge U.S. imperialism.

In Washington's view, to "contain" the Soviets was good, but to eliminate them was even better. Thus, the second phase of U.S. military doctrine: to execute a pre-emptive nuclear attack against the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s. But Soviet development of the A-bomb in 1949 and the hydrogen bomb in 1953 made such a first-strike project too risky for the U.S.

Therefore, Washington adopted a defensive nuclear doctrine: using nuclear bombs exclusively in case of an attack against the U.S. But in reality in at least 18 cases the U.S. threatened to nuke other countries, including China, Vietnam and Lebanon, among others.

After the implosion of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the Pentagon redesigned its military strategy for the new globalized world in 1995 under the Clinton administration. Hitler's Blitzkrieg doctrine, adapted by NATO under the concept Air Land Battle, was replaced by the "Global Reach," devised by the U.S. Air Force and first practiced in the wars against Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

The Pentagon also redefined its nuclear strategy with the "Nuclear

Posture Review" (NPR). This went beyond merely counter-attacking with nuclear weapons if attacked, but also considered their use if any country tried to reach nuclear parity with the U.S. Based on NPR, Clinton threatened to "wipe North Korea from the face of the Earth" if that country was developing nuclear bombs.

Bush has merely extended this doctrine, preparing "preemptive annihilation" of anyone interfering with U.S. rulers' aim of turning the world into a giant slave camp serving the new multi-national corporate masters.

This use of extraordinary brutality, always typical of capitalism, is hidden behind an ideological smokescreen clouding the consciousness of the exploited masses about the terminal crisis of capitalism: a) its failure as a modern production system to provide a decent life, and b) its obsolete parliamentary superstructure, becoming increasingly dysfunctional in controlling society.

The intellectual-metaphysical apologists of the system in this stage of fascist structural crisis range from Sam Huntington, a proponent of the U.S. massacre in Vietnam, who now espouses a chauvinist "clash of civilizations" to attack Islamic peoples in general; to Michael Hardt and Antoni Negri's Empire, saying there are no more imperialist powers, to the post-mortem post-modernism of John Holloway, changing the world without



taking state power.

This new world order brings us to the U.S.-British "liberation" of Afghanistan, which has restored banditry and heroin production, while the puppet regime of Karzai only has a presence in a couple of cities. Most of the country is controlled by warlords and Islamic fundamentalists.

CHALLENGE comments: One must add: rival imperialists won't remain subservient to U.S. imperialism's world order forever. France, Germany and others have already shown they are not too happy with Bush's plan to take sole control of Iraq's huge oil wealth. This rivalry will lead to many more wars, and eventually to another world war. The international working class has never played dead, no matter what the bosses do. The way to make sure the capitalist crisis becomes really terminal is to organize an international revolutionary communist movement. ☸

Seizing Iraqi Oil — U.S. Learns From Japanese Fascists

TERRORIST BOSSES KILL FOUR IN NORTH CAROLINA

Bush's Jan. 28 war speech omitted one key reason why U.S. imperialists need to attack Iraq: control of its oil, second largest reserve worldwide after Saudi Arabia. But while the White House tries to mask the real purpose for attacking Iraq, the Pentagon is planning to seize the oil fields as soon as Desert Storm II begins. There are some precedents limiting this: "A tribunal after World War II found that Japan breached international law by aggressively exploiting occupied oil fields in the Dutch East Indies and using the oil to fuel its own war needs. Another widely cited precedent involves Israel's operation of occupied oil fields in the Sinai after the 1967 Six-Day oil War. The State Department criticized Israel's actions in that case..." (*Wall Street Journal*, 1/29).

Now that U.S. rulers want to do the same in Iraq, it's doing the usual: ignoring, disobeying or skirting all international laws that limit them. "If you justify [actions] under the law of military occupation, you can justify just about anything," said one administration official familiar with the current debate among Pentagon and State Department lawyers. (*WSJ*).

Basically, the military commanders of the invading Army can do anything they want, even force civilians to work the oil fields. If workers struck, the generals could force them back with the bayonet, just as Saddam does. This is the kind of strike-breaking "democracy" Bush wants to install in Iraq, just like his administration's threat to use troops against a dockworkers' strike on the U.S. West Coast.

The U.S. imperialists resemble the Japanese fascist army that occupied the Indonesian oil fields during World War II, and maybe worse. (The CIA organized the fascist coup there in 1965, killing over one million communists, workers and peasants.) When fighting to be top-dog imperialist, and for its key ingredient — control of Middle-East oil — mass murder is the name of the game for the U.S. and all bosses. ☹

The Jan. 29 explosion at the West Pharmaceutical plant in Kinston, NC that killed four workers, injured 37 and wiped out the livelihood of 255 workers follows a carnage of terror that has produced 437 factory deaths in this state in the last two years.

The bosses' media label these slaughters "accidents," but an inspector reported 22 serious safety violations in this very plant just this past October. He characterized them as "routine for the myriad plants that dot the Carolina countryside." (*Christian Science Monitor*, 2/1)

The South's bosses and "pro-industry government continue to 'wink and nod' at hazardous manufacturing conditions." No wonder "It's dangerous to go to work for most of the people in this state," says the director of the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Project, a state that is 96% non-union. (CSM) And, of course, there is a complete "lack of criminal prosecutions" for the bosses responsible for this butchery.

While investigators supposedly try to determine if clouds of rubber dust or a newly-installed gas line caused the explosion, the county commission rushed to give \$600,000 to West's owners to re-build the plant and a landlord offered the company's executives free office space. There were no reports of funds being offered to the victims' families or to the 255 workers who lost their jobs. Three cheers for the terrorists of free-market capitalism. ☹

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, WG=Weekly Guardian

U.S. broke N.Korea agreements

In 1994, Kim Il Sung agreed to freeze the nuclear situation at Yongbyon and permit international inspectors to monitor the agreement. In return, the United States was to pledge that nuclear weapons would not be used against North Korea and that two modern light-water reactors would be built to replace the Yongbyon facility. . . . In the meantime, a monthly supply of fuel oil would help provide electrical power. . . the promised light-water reactors were not built. The Bush administration brought a change in relationship with both Koreas. . . the monthly shipments of fuel oil were terminated.

Washington Post 1-14

Europeans say no to U.S. war

European public opposition to a war appears to be hitting a new peak.... 32 percent in Britain, 76 percent in Germany and 77 percent in France — are against the military action even with the blessing of the United Nations.

The opposition reflects a deep uneasiness with America's increasingly assertive role as the world's only superpower.

NYT Jan 22

More workers lose insurance

Two-thirds of the states say they are cutting Medicaid benefits, increasing co-payments, restricting eligibility or removing poor people from the rolls because of soaring costs and plunging revenues.

. . . One million to two million low-income people would lose insurance coverage because of the cutbacks.

The Bush administration has opposed any increase in the federal share of

Medicaid, saying that the federal government has fiscal problems of its own.

NYT January 14

Loans backfire on students

. . . A lot of students are questioning whether they should have borrowed so much money. . . Family background plays a big role. 62 percent of low-income borrowers said they regretted taking out so much in loans. Similarly, only 54 percent of low-income students said the debt ultimately paid off in terms of their career goals. . . At Harvard, "We kept hearing, 'I'm going to go work in industry for a few years, then I will return to what I care about.' Frankly I'm not sure how many of them were able to make the return trip."

NYT January 28

Poll: War stems from U.S.

The European edition of *Time Magazine* has been conducting a poll on its Web site: "Which country poses the greatest danger to world peace in 2003?" With 318,000 votes cast so far, the responses are North Korea, 7 percent; Iraq, 8 percent; the United States, 84 percent.

NYT January 31

Make job safe? Cheaper to kill

The regulatory system has often proven itself incapable of thwarting flagrant and continual safety and environmental violations by major corporations, according to a nine-month examination by *The New York Times*.

In plant after plant, year after year, workers have been maimed, burned, sickened and killed by the same safety and health failures. Flammable materials are mishandled; respirators are not provided; machines are missing safety guards; employees are not

trained.

"The current law is inadequate to deal with serious violators, repetitive violators, situations where people are put at risk day after day," said Charles N. Jeffress, who headed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the late 1990's.

Indeed, under federal law, causing the death of a worker by willfully violating safety rules is a misdemeanor with a six month maximum prison term. . . managers viewed the burden of regulatory fines as far less onerous than the cost of fully complying with safety and environmental rules.

NYT January 10

'Amazingly' soft on biz crime

The staff of the Securities and Exchange Commission plans to recommend that the agency soften proposed rules that would impose new obligations on lawyers and accountants. . . Some of the toughest proposals appear to be dead, watered down or postponed, S.E.C. officials said today. Critics attributed the shift to heavy lobbying. . . "We've had Enron, Tyco, Worldcom. And despite all of that, the commission is softening, rather than toughening, the rules in favor of the attorneys and auditors to the great detriment of investors. . . It's just amazing."

NYT January 22

Poor pay a rich tax rate

"It doesn't take a lot of income to start paying a lot of taxes," Professor Kotlikoff said. Over their lifetimes, "the superpoor don't pay taxes but the poor do."

. . . The total burden from nearly all forms of taxation — income, sales, property and excise taxes, and the Social Security payroll tax — was strikingly similar across the entire spectrum of incomes in 2001.

For individuals and families in the

lowest fifth, with an average income of \$7,946 (including just \$25 in dividends), the cumulative tax rate was 18 percent. For the top fifth, with an average income of \$116,666 (including \$1,188 in dividends), the rate was 19 percent.

NYT January 21

French have their own \$lant

In private, many French diplomats acknowledge that the war is inevitable. In public, they say war can be avoided. . . The French are more interested perhaps in being guaranteed access to Iraq's oil resources.

NYT January 24

U.S. backed Guatemala's terror

Now that the United States has declared war on terrorism, it is useful to ask just what it is we are fighting.

What about stopping the governments that support the governments that terrorize their own people? Governments like ours, for instance? Oh, but that was in a good cause — fighting communism. Before El Salvador, before Chile, even before Vietnam, there was Guatemala.

. . . Let us listen to the old men and women, close to death now, whose parents worked in near slavery for those landowners, and who believed that when they elected the reformer Jacobo Arbenz in 1952, their lives would change for the better. Wilkinson shows us the documents that labeled Arbenz a communist and justified his U.S.-sponsored overthrow. . . He tells of the death threats he received as he was doing his research. . . . The terrorism continued for more than 50 years, with U.S. support and official silence. The result? "Guatemala was a place where terrorism did, in fact, win."

Washington Post